DC
SUPERMAN
STARRING IN
ACTION COMICS
572
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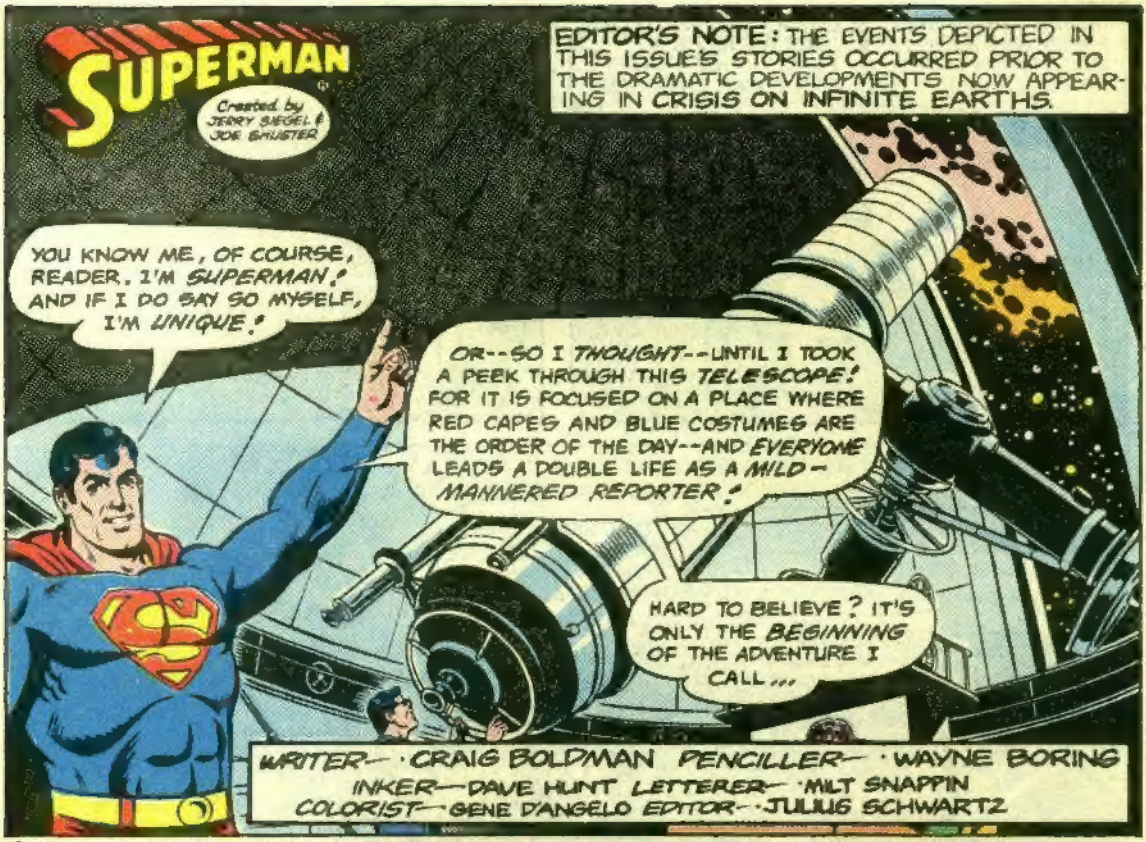
THE WORLD of SUPERMAN MASQUERADERS!
PLUS TWO MORE STARTLING STORIES!
1935
50 DC
1985


SUPERMAN
Created by JERRY SIEGEL & JOE SHUSTER
EDITOR'S NOTE: THE EVENTS DEPICTED IN THIS ISSUE'S STORIES OCCURRED PRIOR TO THE DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS NOW APPEARING IN CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS.
YOU KNOW ME, OF COURSE, READER. I'M SUPERMAN! AND IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF, I'M UNIQUE!
OR--SO I THOUGHT--UNTIL I TOOK A PEEK THROUGH THIS TELESCOPE! FOR IT IS FOCUSED ON A PLACE WHERE RED CAPES AND BLUE COSTUMES ARE THE ORDER OF THE DAY--AND EVERYONE LEADS A DOUBLE LIFE AS A MILD-MANNERED REPORTER!
HARD TO BELIEVE? IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING OF THE ADVENTURE I CALL...
WRITER--CRAIG BOLDMAN PENCILLER--WAYNE BORING
INKER--DAVE HUNT LETTERER--MILT SNAPPIN
COLORIST--GENE D'ANGELO EDITOR--JULIUS SCHWARTZ

"THE WORLD OF SUPERMAN MASQUERADERS!"

APT. 3D, 344 CLINTON STREET, METROPOLIS--
MORNING, MR. KENT--DO YOU REMEMBER ME?
PROFESSOR CREIGHTON! OF COURSE! I DID A STORY ABOUT YOUR WORK AT THE OBSERVATORY LAST YEAR!
I'M AFRAID YOU CAUGHT ME AT A BAD TIME--I WAS JUST LEAVING TO CATCH THE METROPOLIS FOUNDERS' PARADE!
ALL I NEED IS A MINUTE--TO SHOW YOU THESE PICTURES OF EARTH'S MOON THAT I TOOK WITH THE OBSERVATORY'S EXPERIMENTAL LASER TELESCOPE.

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KINGSUBSCH - DCP

INEXPLICABLY, THIS PHOTO WAS AMONG THOSE TAKEN OF THE LUNAR SURFACE!
GREAT SCOTT! IT SEEMS TO BE A PLANET WHERE EVERY-ONE LOOKS LIKE--ME!
HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN IT, PROFESSOR?
I CAN'T! I'VE NOT SHOWN THIS TO ANYONE ELSE! FRANKLY, I'M APPREHENSIVE ABOUT WHAT MY COLLEAGUES MIGHT SAY!
I'M INCLINED TO WRITE IT OFF AS SOMETHING--ER--WELL--UNEXPLAIN-ABLE!
A SHORT TIME LATER, AS CLARK AND LANA LANG ENJOY THE FOUNDERS' PARADE...
CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY MIND! WHAT COULD THAT ODD PHOTOGRAPH MEAN?
HERE IT COMES, CLARK! THIS YEAR'S SPECIAL ATTRACTION--A GIGANTIC SUPERMAN BALLOON!
METROPOLIS FOUNDERS' DAY
CLARK! THAT CONSTRUCTION SCAFFOLD IS TOPPLING! IT'S FRIGHTENED THOSE ELEPHANTS!
AS WELL AS THE CROWD! MY WORK IS CUT OUT FOR ME!
METROPOLIS FOUNDERS' DAY
MY SUPER-BREATH WILL DIRECT THAT BANNER OVER HERE--AND SEPARATE ME FROM LANA!
CLARK--WATCH OUT!
PUFF-FI
OUT
TROP
IS
LANA WILL ASSUME THAT CLARK GOT LOST IN THE CROWD!
I'VE GOT MY HANDS FULL WITH THIS COLLAPSING STRUCTURE! BUT THOSE PANICKY ELEPHANTS ARE RUNNING LOOSE AS WELL!
2

OR ARE THEY? THE "STAMPEDE" SEEMS TO HAVE STOPPED!
GREAT STARS! THE GIANT SUPERMAN "BALLOON" WAS NOT A BALLOON AT ALL! IT'S ALIVE!
WHOEVER MY OVER-SIZED TWIN IS, HE'S CALMING DOWN THOSE PACHYDERMS!
AFTER THE COMMOTION HAS SETTLED DOWN...
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE, SUPERMAN!
I SUGGEST YOU AND I HAVE A TALK, FRIEND!
LET'S FLY OFF TO A MORE SECLUDED PLACE!
THEN, AT A DESERTED SECTION ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF METROPOLIS...
OKAY... YOU OBVIOUSLY KNOW ALL ABOUT ME.. BUT I'VE NO IDEA WHO YOU ARE!
YOU WILL-- WHEN I TURN INTO MY REAL SELF!
COULD IT BE--?
GOLLO?!
THAT'S ME--THE REAL ME!--BACK ON EARTH AFTER ALL THESE YEARS!
SUPERMAN'S MIND HEARKENS BACK TO HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE ALIEN CREATURE...
GOLLO CAUSED ME PLENTY OF TROUBLE WITH HIS SHAPE-CHANGING POWERS DURING THAT VISIT!*
I THOUGHT HE WAS A SUPER-MENACE...
*"THE CREATURE OF 1000 DISGUISES!" --ACTION COMICS #234-- JULIE

...UNTIL I REALIZED HE WAS JUST A YOUNGSTER PLAYING GAMES!
I CAN STILL READ YOUR THOUGHTS, SUPERMAN!
BUT WE SHAPE-CHANGERS GROW UP VERY QUICKLY! I'M AN ADULT NOW!
I CAME HERE BECAUSE MY HOME PLANET, ZAR, IS IN BAD TROUBLE! WE NEED YOUR HELP!
I DO WHAT I CAN FOR MY FRIENDS! LEAD THE WAY HOME, GOLLO!
A QUICK 240,000-MILE FLIGHT TO EARTH'S MOON...
HERE'S THE GATEWAY THAT LEADS TO MY PLANET! IT ONLY OPENS ONCE IN A WHILE!
HMM! A SPACE-WARP--LOCATED IN A LUNAR CRATER!
STARTLINGLY, WHEN THEY BREAK THROUGH THE SPACE-WARP...
GOLLO--EVERY MEMBER OF YOUR RACE--LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE CLARK KENT!
I FIGURED YOU WOULD BE SURPRISED!
THAT CLEARS UP ONE MYSTERY--THE PROFESSOR'S TELE-SCOPE PENETRATED THE SPACE-WARP TO GET THAT "MYSTERY PHOTO"!
"WHEN I RETURNED TO ZAR AFTER MY VISIT TO EARTH, I TOLD ALL MY FRIENDS ABOUT YOU!"
THIS WAS THE MOST IMPRESSIVE THING I SAW ON EARTH!
WHAT A TERRIFIC NEW SHAPE! LET'S ALL IMITATE IT, TOO!
EVERYBODY THOUGHT YOU WERE SO NEAT, THAT BEFORE LONG, WE ALL BECAME SUPER-MEN AND STAYED THAT WAY!
DOES THIS MEAN YOU KNOW ABOUT--ME AND CLARK KENT?
4

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

OH, SURE! I COULD HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS, REMEMBER? WE ALL WANT TO BE JUST LIKE YOU--OUR HERO!
BUT WAIT!
SEE THAT FLYING CREATURE? THIS IS PART OF THE TROUBLE I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT!
WATCH WHAT HAPPENS!
AWARK
OHH! MY QUEASY STOMACH! I'VE GOT TO LIE DOWN!
I'VE GOT TO MAKE A PHONE CALL!
OOPS!! I TRIPPED!
BUT MOMENTS LATER...
THEY'VE REAPPEARED AS SUPERMEN!
AND THEY'RE GOING TO FIGHT THAT MENACE--JUST LIKE YOU WOULD!
ME--I'M GONNA HIDE!
AWARK!
THEY'RE DRIVING THE WINGED MONSTER AWAY--BUT A "SUPER-MAN" HAS BEEN HURT!
I'M AFRAID SO! WE CAN ADOPT YOUR LOOKS, BUT NOT YOUR POWER! WE'VE ONLY OUR NATURAL STRENGTH AND FLYING ABILITY--
--AND THAT BRINGS ME TO OUR PROBLEM!

UP TILL A FEW YEARS AGO, WE NEVER NEEDED TO FIGHT! OUR LAND WAS PEACEFUL!
BUT NOW OUR WORLD HAS GROWN MORE SAVAGE! WE ARE CONSTANTLY BEING RAIDED BY WILD CREATURES!
THE WORST ARE THE TRUNDLE BEASTS! THEY INVADE OUR VILLAGE -- FORCE US OUT AND TAKE OVER OUR FOOD AND WATER SOURCES!
WE CAN'T STOP THEM! WE'RE NOT USED TO FIGHTING!
THAT'S WHY I CAME TO YOU! WE SENSE THAT THE BEASTS ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE AGAIN!
LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT THESE TRUNDLE BEASTS!
SOON, MILES FROM GOLLO'S VILLAGE...
THERE'S ONE! IT IS WELL AHEAD OF THE REST OF THE HERD!
IT'S A JUGGERNAUT, ALL RIGHT -- BUT I SHOULDN'T HAVE MUCH TROUBLE HANDLING IT!
NO TROUBLE AT ALL -- IT'S RUNNING AWAY!
MAYBE IT CAN SENSE YOUR POWER AND IS FRIGHTENED OF YOU!
GOOD! THEN I WON'T HAVE TO USE FORCE ON THEM!
STAY HERE, GOLLO -- I'LL FLY AHEAD TO THE MAIN HERD AND DRIVE THEM AWAY FROM YOUR VILLAGE!

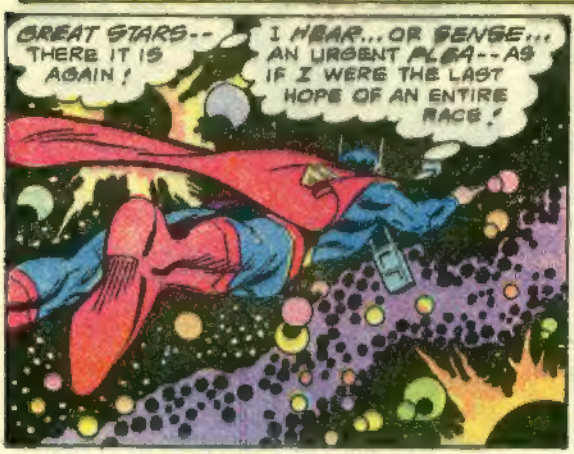
IF GOLLO'S HUNCH WAS RIGHT, THESE LUMBERING BEASTS WILL SWERVE AWAY FROM ME!
TRUMP!
SO MUCH FOR GOLLO'S HUNCH!
BUT I'VE JUST COME UP WITH A HUNCH OF MY OWN. GOT TO GET BACK TO GOLLO!
I COULDN'T STOP THEM, GOLLO -- THAT'S A JOB FOR YOU!
M-ME?!?
THAT FIRST BEAST WASN'T AFRAID OF ME -- BUT OF YOU!
COME ON--BACK TO THE VILLAGE!
GOLLO HAS RETURNED!
WHY IS HE BACK IN THAT IDIOTIC SHAPE?
LOOK WHO IS WITH HIM--THE REAL SUPERMAN!
HE IS SO SHORT!
TELL ME, SHAPE-CHANGERS -- DID YOUR HARDSHIPS BEGIN WHEN YOU STARTED IMITATING ME?
WHY--COME TO THINK OF IT-- YES!
SO--?
7

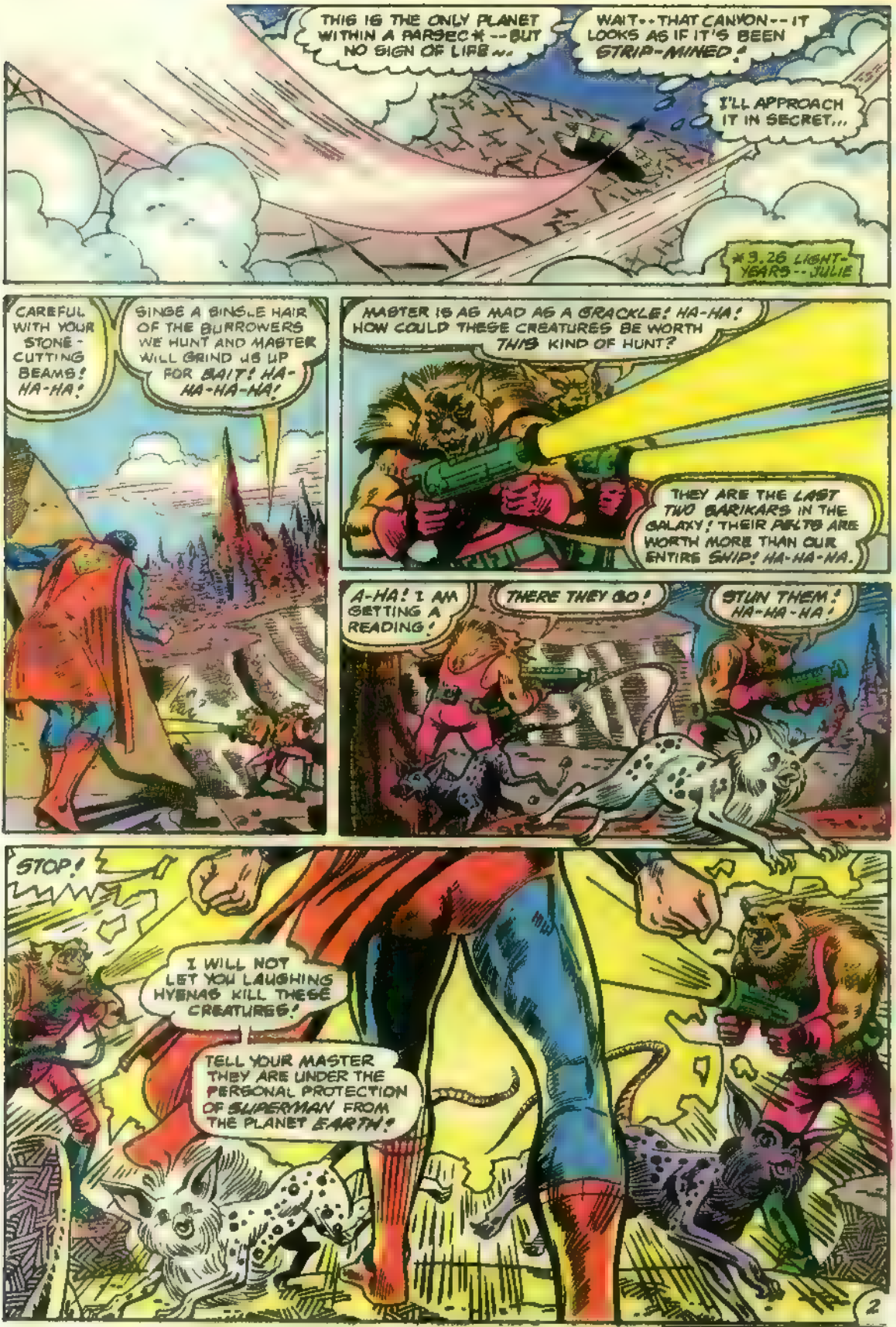
SO--IF YOU HAD CAMOUFLAGED YOURSELVES WHEN THAT WINGED CREATURE APPROACHED EARLIER--AS GOLLO DID--YOU COULD HAVE AVOIDED THAT CONFLICT!
WE USED TO HIDE FROM THEM--
--BEFORE WE BECAME SUPERMEN!
THAT'S MY POINT! YOU WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE SUPERMEN!
BY STUBBORNLY REJECTING YOUR NATURAL INSTINCTS AND ABILITIES, YOU'VE BROUGHT TROUBLE ON YOURSELVES!
HERE COME THE TRUNDLE BEASTS! QUICKLY! REVERT TO YOUR NORMAL FORMS!
WHAT HAVE WE GOT TO LOSE--
--BUT OUR LIVES!
ABRUPTLY...
AMAZING! THE BEASTS ARE TURNING AWAY--FLEEING!
I WONDER WHY?
BECAUSE THEY HAVE A NATURAL FEAR OF YOUR NORMAL FORM!
UNTIL YOU BEGAN YOUR SUPERMAN MASQUERADE, YOU HAD AUTOMATIC PROTECTION FROM THEM!
HOORAY! SUPERMAN SOLVED OUR PROBLEM!
FAREWELL, MY FRIEND--YOU ARE THE GREATEST SUPERMAN OF ALL!
AND YOU BEINGS ARE JUST GREAT AS YOURSELVES!
GOOD-BYE, GOLLO!
NOW THAT I'VE SEALED UP THE SPACE-WARP, IT'S BACK TO EARTH!
PROFESSOR CREIGHTON WILL NEVER KNOW THAT HIS "MYSTERY PHOTO" WAS OF A RACE SUFFERING FROM A NEAR TERMINAL CASE OF--HERO WORSHIP!
THE END

SUPERMAN
NO NORMAL MAN COULD EVER IMAGINE THE "MUSIC OF THE SPHERES"--THE HARMONIES OF THE PLANETS IN ROTATION!
THAT'S ODD--I THOUGHT I HEARD A CRY FOR HELP!
CAN'T BE! SOUND DOESN'T TRAVEL IN SPACE!
WHEN I CONVERT THEIR GRAVITATIONAL ENERGIES TO SOUND, IT'S AS PEACEFUL AS WHALE SONGS!

"SOS from NOWHERE!"

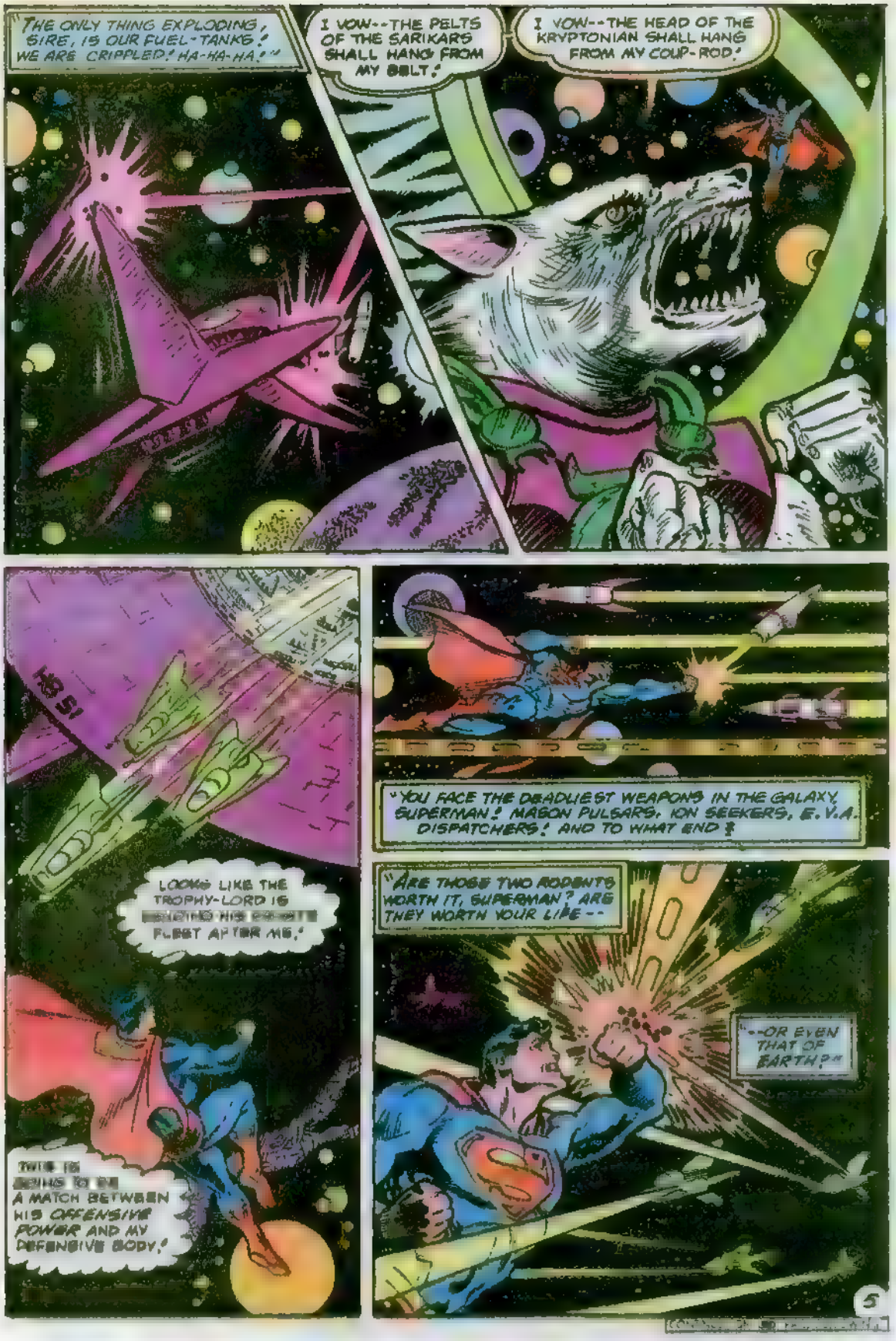
BEPPE SABATINI, WRITER | HOWARD BENDER, PENCILLER | BOB OKSNER, INKER | MILT SNAPINN, LETTERER | GENE D'ANGELO, COLORIST | JULIUS SCHWARTZ, EDITOR

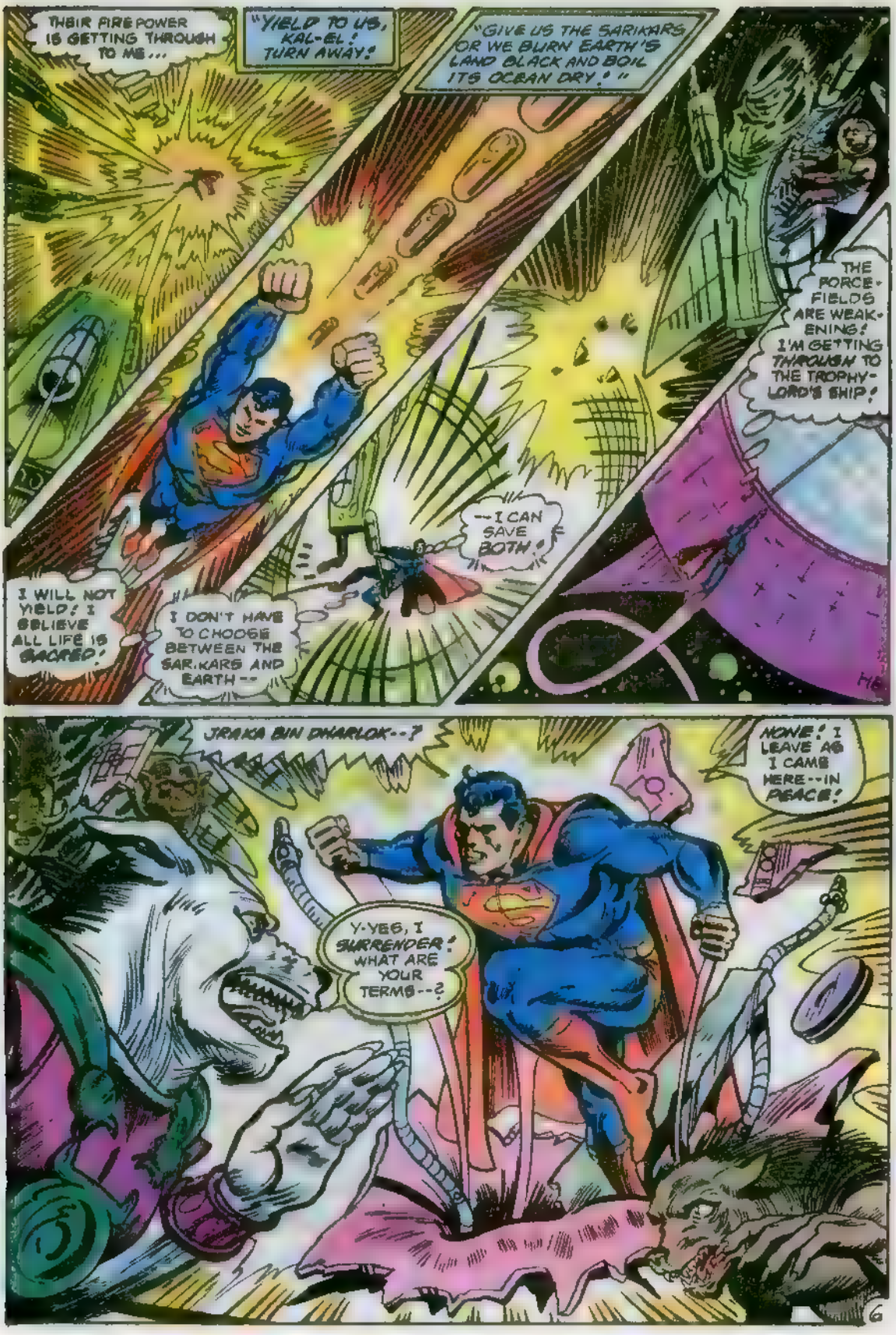



THIS IS THE ONLY PLANET WITHIN A PARSEC* -- BUT NO SIGN OF LIFE...
WAIT -- THAT CANYON -- IT LOOKS AS IF IT'S BEEN STRIP-MINED!
I'LL APPROACH IT IN SECRET...
*3.26 LIGHT-YEARS -- JULIE
CAREFUL WITH YOUR STONE-CUTTING BEAMS! HA-HA!
SINGE A SINGLE HAIR OF THE BURROWERS WE HUNT AND MASTER WILL GRIND US UP FOR BAIT! HA-HA-HA-HA!
MASTER IS AS MAD AS A CRACKLE! HA-HA! HOW COULD THESE CREATURES BE WORTH THIS KIND OF HUNT?
THEY ARE THE LAST TWO BARIKARS IN THE GALAXY! THEIR PELTS ARE WORTH MORE THAN OUR ENTIRE SHIP! HA-HA-HA.
A-HA! I AM GETTING A READING!
THERE THEY GO!
STUN THEM! HA-HA-HA!
STOP!
I WILL NOT LET YOU LAUGHING HYENAS KILL THESE CREATURES!
TELL YOUR MASTER THEY ARE UNDER THE PERSONAL PROTECTION OF SUPERMAN FROM THE PLANET EARTH!
2
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

SUPERMAN -- HERE?!
AND HE DID WHAT--?!
Y-YES, GREAT TROPHY-LORD! HA-HA-HA!
W-WE ARE SORRY, MIGHTY STARHUNTER! HA-HA!
SUPERMAN! MIGHTIEST HERO IN THE UNIVERSE!
OF ALL THE ONES THOSE GIGGLING HYENAS HAD TO MEET!
BUT THE KRYPTONIAN HAS NO AUTHORITY HERE,,, NO RACE, NO LAW PROTECTS THE SARIKARS!
IF EVER A PRIZE WAS WORTH THE HUNT,,, IF EVER A CHAMPION WAS WORTH THE CHALLENGE,,, THAT IS WHAT I FACE TODAY!
THIS ATMOSPHERIC BUBBLE WILL PROTECT THESE CREATURES--
--TI'LL I FIND A SAFE REFUGE FOR THEM ON THIS PLANETOID!
GREAT KRYPTON!
THE PLANETOID-- BLASTED TO SMITHEREENS!
YOU WILL SUFFER THE SAME FATE, SUPERMAN--
--UNLESS YOU SURRENDER TO THE TROPHY-LORD THE QUARRY YOU HOLD!
THE ANSWER IS NO!

I HAVE SOME NO'S FOR YOU, SUPERMAN -- YOU HAVE NO CLAIM ON THE BARIKARS! YOU HAVE NO CAUSE TO SAVE THEM! THEY SERVE NO PURPOSE IN THE GALAXY --
-- EXCEPT THE RIGHT TO LIFE!
I OFFER YOU AN EXCHANGE, SUPERMAN! THE CREATURES' PELTS FOR THE PRICELESS HORN OF A KRYPTONIAN RANCOR!
MY ANSWER IS STILL NO! THE CREATURES ARE UNDER MY PROTECTION!
THEY'LL BE SAFE INSIDE THIS GASEOUS PLANET WHILE WE FIGHT THIS OUT!
HERE COMES MY FOE'S OPENING SHOT -- THE SAME ONE THAT SHATTERED THE PLANETOID!
"JHELAK'S BONES! HE IS STILL IN ONE PIECE?!
"ONE MAN -- UNARMED, UNPROTECTED, IN THE HARD VACUUM OF SPACE --
-- WITHSTANDS OUR MIGHTIEST BLAST!?"
"TROPHY-LORD! HIS EYES -- BLAZING LIKE A SUPER-NOVA! HA-HA-HA!
"HE IS ABOUT TO EXPLODE! I HAVE WON!"


"THE ONLY THING EXPLODING, SIRE, IS OUR FUEL-TANKS! WE ARE CRIPPLED! HA-HA-HA!"
I VOW--THE PELTS OF THE SARIKARS SHALL HANG FROM MY BELT!
I VOW--THE HEAD OF THE KRYPTONIAN SHALL HANG FROM MY COUP-ROD!
HSS!
LOOKS LIKE THE TROPHY-LORD IS [illegible] HIS POINTE FLEET AFTER ME.
THIS IS GOING TO BE A MATCH BETWEEN HIS OFFENSIVE POWER AND MY DEFENSIVE BODY.
"YOU FACE THE DEADLIEST WEAPONS IN THE GALAXY, SUPERMAN! MASON PULSARS, ION SEEKERS, E.V.A. DISPATCHERS! AND TO WHAT END?
"ARE THOSE TWO RODENTS WORTH IT, SUPERMAN? ARE THEY WORTH YOUR LIFE--
--OR EVEN THAT OF EARTH?"
5


THEIR FIRE POWER IS GETTING THROUGH TO ME...
"YIELD TO US, KAL-EL! TURN AWAY!
"GIVE US THE SARIKARS OR WE BURN EARTH'S LAND BLACK AND BOIL ITS OCEAN DRY!"
THE FORCE-FIELDS ARE WEAKENING! I'M GETTING THROUGH TO THE TROPHY-LORD'S SHIP!
--I CAN SAVE BOTH!
I WILL NOT YIELD! I BELIEVE ALL LIFE IS SACRED!
I DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE SARIKARS AND EARTH--
JRAKA BIN DHARLOK--?
NONE! I LEAVE AS I CAME HERE--IN PEACE!
Y-YES, I SURRENDER! WHAT ARE YOUR TERMS--?
6

WELL, MY LITTLE SARIKARS-- LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN DO ABOUT SETTING UP A NEW LIFE FOR YOU!
YOU'LL LIKE IT HERE IN THE FORTRESS! I'VE BEEN CONVERTING MY ZOO INTO AN INTERPLANETARY WILD-LIFE PRESERVE!
USING BRAINIAC'S SHRINKING RAY, I'LL PLACE YOU INTO A MINIATURE PERFECT ENVIRONMENT-- AND MONITOR YOU WITH MICROSCOPIC FLOATING CAMERAS!
HOPEFULLY, I'LL BE ABLE TO SOLVE THE INBREEDING PROBLEM--
--AND SAVE YOUR ENTIRE SPECIES!
EH?-- SOMEONE MATERIALIZING-- TELEPORTING INTO THE FORTRESS!
MUST BE WELL-ADVANCED TO BYPASS MY DEFENSES!
POP
AT LONG LAST WE ARE ABLE TO THANK YOU, SUPERMAN!
WE ARE NOT OF YOUR TIME, BUT OF THE FAR FUTURE!
IT IS OUR RACE'S MISSION TO FEED THE HUNGRY--SOLACE THE ILL--TEACH PEACE TO THE WARLIKE--AND COMPASSION TO THE CRUEL!
AND WE LEARNED ALL THIS FROM YOU!
WE ARE THE SARIKARS-- DISTANT DESCENDANTS OF THE CREATURES YOU SAVED TODAY!
7

FOR YOUR COURAGE OF THIS DAY WE ARE HONORED TO PRESENT YOU WITH THE HIGHEST HONOR OUR RACE CAN BESTOW --
-- THE SUPERMAN MEDALLION!
I'M VERY HONORED! TWICE HONORED! THOUGH I SORT OF WISH YOU'D BEEN HERE EARLIER TO HELP OUT!
OH, THAT IS FORBIDDEN, SUPERMAN!
THE CLOCK ONCE STRUCK CANNOT BE HELPED TO CHIME!
I WAS HAPPY TO SAVE YOUR ANCESTORS! I ALWAYS FIGHT FOR MY BELIEFS --
--NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT OR THANKLESS!
BUT I WONDER-- YOUR ANCESTORS WERE TOO PRIMITIVE TO TRANSMIT MESSAGES!
YET, I HEARD THEM ON MY TAPE-DECK -- WHICH CONVERTS ENERGY TO MUSIC! IT DOESN'T RECEIVE SOUND!
HOW WAS IT POSSIBLE TO HEAR THEIR CRY FOR HELP ACROSS THE VOID?
THAT.. PERHAPS... WE MAY NEVER KNOW!
BUT WHEN OUR EVOLVING RACE WAS DEVELOPING ITS TELEPATHY --
--WE DO KNOW WHO WERE THE FIRST TO RECEIVE STRONG SIGNALS FOR HELP!
IT WAS THOSE WHO SHOWED THE MOST...
...COMPASSION!
The End

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Dear Bob and Julie,

Pink being one of my favorite colors, I shouldn't complain about the cover of the June *ACTION* comic, I suppose. Alas, the artwork didn't live up to the er, heart-warming coloring. (Sorry about that) Jimmy Olsen, in the foreground, looked as if a bird had pecked out his left eye rather than he was winking. Or maybe he was on a bender. (That one I'm not sorry about.)

Moving inside to "Disappearing Act," Elliot Maggin rarely fails to pen an entertaining *Superman* story and this is no exception. Although the Man of Steel was not taxed in any way (compared to Luthor, Brainiac, or an alien invasion, calming a maddened elephant doesn't even constitute a menace), the characterization of Clark, Jina Turner, young Perry (the grandson) and Perry the grandfather—especially the latter—made for a pleasant read. In fact, Perry White's absent-mindedness overshadowed all else. Will you be maintaining this accent on Perry's approaching senility? I hope so! I don't think such a topic has been spotlighted before in comics and it clearly merits attention. As *Superman* said on pg. 16, panel 6, senility is an illness for which there is currently no cure, or even treatment. Of course, Perry is a long way yet from being truly senile. His lapses here are more funny than frightening, but having seen my grandmother deteriorate mentally in an alarmingly short time before her death, I can understand *Superman*'s concern.

Craig Boldman's "Amazing Matchmaker of Metropolis" was inferior to "Disappearing Act," but this should not imply any overt criticism of a perfectly simple and fun yarn. It just had a tough time comparing to Elliot's story. Craig did just about everything right in the meager 8 pages allowed him. Jimmy's misuse of the 30th-century thought actualizer provided for interesting reactions from Clark and Lois. I was kind of hoping that Clark's "dream girl" would turn out to be Lana Lang, as I believe she is his perfect mate, but *Nova-Woman* was a credible candidate for a "super date." Didn't Mindy look a lot like Diana Prince?

DALE COE
41 Whitecross Rd.
Warrington, Cheshire
WA5 1LR England

Now...Diana Prince looks a lot like Mindy!—LR

•••••

Dear Julie and Bob,

It's disturbing to see Perry White coming down with Alzheimer's Disease. But don't let anyone tell you it's "too heavy" for *Superman*. Don't let anyone tell you you're jumping on the "topical bandwagon." And don't, please don't use some gimmicky super-cure. Like the famous Amazon Purple Ray, for that raises some very uncomfortable questions. Mainly, why aren't these miracle cures available to everyone instead of just super-heroes and their friends? Take this plotline to its eventual conclusion, no matter how unpleasant.

JOHN HENRY SAIN
1251 Kings Highway
Medford, Oregon 97501

John, you have our assurance that whatever happens to Perry will be handled with taste and dignity.—LR

•••••

Dear Julie and Bob,

ACTION #568 marked the welcome return of writer Elliot S! Maggin. Although not one of his greatest stories, "Disappearing Act" was an offbeat and interesting little adventure. Curt Swan and Al Williamson did their usual excellent job illustrating the yarn. The elephants were beautifully drawn.

"The Amazing Matchmaker of Metropolis" was another great 8-pager. Craig Boldman is a wildly imaginative story-teller. Who else would have *Superman* bring Jimmy Olsen along to photograph his capture of a super-villain? (Hold the camera, Jimmy—wait till I start winning!) Terrific stuff. The art of Howard Bender and Alex Nino (an intriguing combination of talents) made the story doubly delightful. I also relished Gene D'Angelo's gorgeous coloring.

One question, though. Who would want to kiss *Supes* after that stunt on page 16, panel 2 of the lead story? Gak!

DAVID PULLEYBLANK
Box 108
Denver, IA 50622

David, I think I speak for a generation of women when I say that we'd all like a super-kiss!—LR

Dear Bob and Julie,

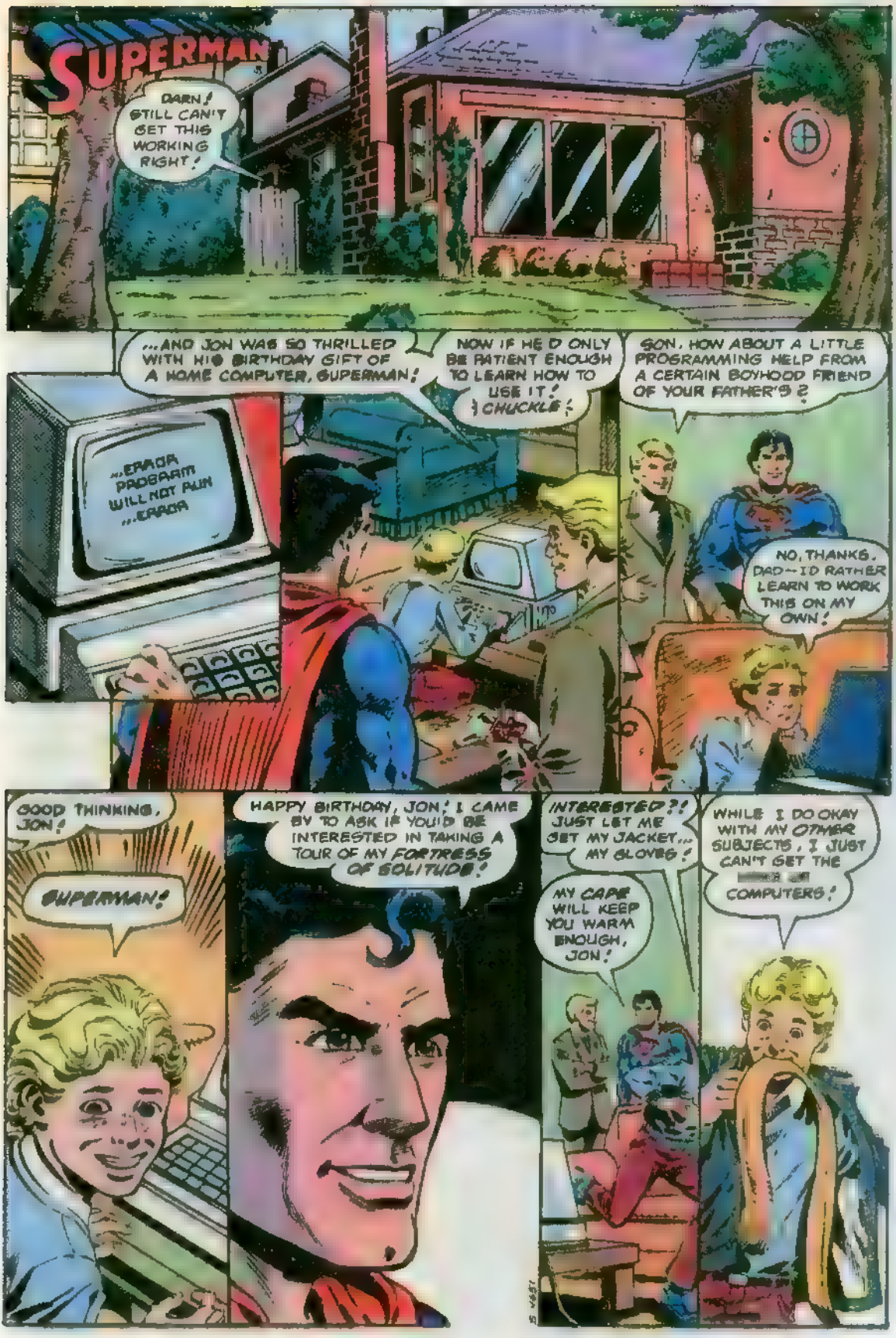
Issue #568 was a good example of your new approach as it should be. Both stories were entertaining, humorous, and did not involve end-of-the world scenarios. The first story had much to recommend it—and Perry's failing memory is proof that your new approach is not entirely lighthearted. However, it was the second story that impressed me the most.

It isn't very often that the backup story is chosen to be featured on the cover, but in this case it was the correct decision. "The Amazing Matchmaker of Metropolis" was a bright and amazing piece that fitted very neatly into the short 8-page length. If I had to pick one (minor) fault, it would be that each of the true loves of Jimmy, Lois, and Clark were portrayed as being very much like each other. Yet you know the saying that opposites attract—so it would have been nice to have one of them a bit different. Actually, I think couples get along if they complement each other—i.e., that the shortcomings of one are balanced by the strengths of the other. And a few compliments never hurt, either!

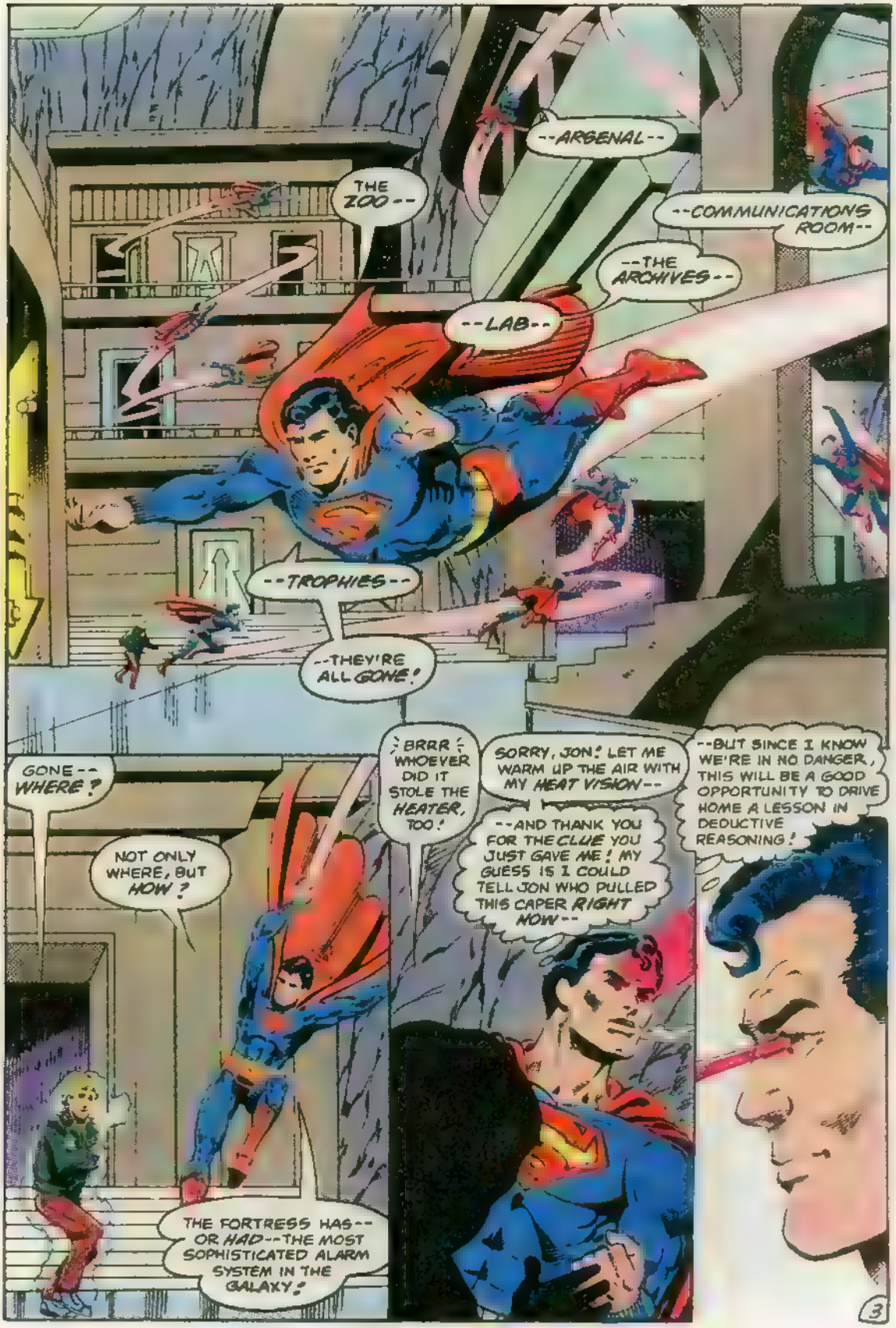
I have said that part of your new approach should be to move Clark back closer to being the wimpish misfit that he once was. Thus, I was glad to see his attire in the first panel of the backup—blue suit, gray shoes, red and white striped shirt, blue tie, and yellow vest with red and black stripes. Too bad it didn't show up elsewhere in the story. It was also interesting to see Jimmy's toeless socks on page 8. What does he do, kick a football around a lot? My socks wear through on the bottom first!

T.M. MAPLE
Box 1972, Station B
Weston, Ont M9L2R9

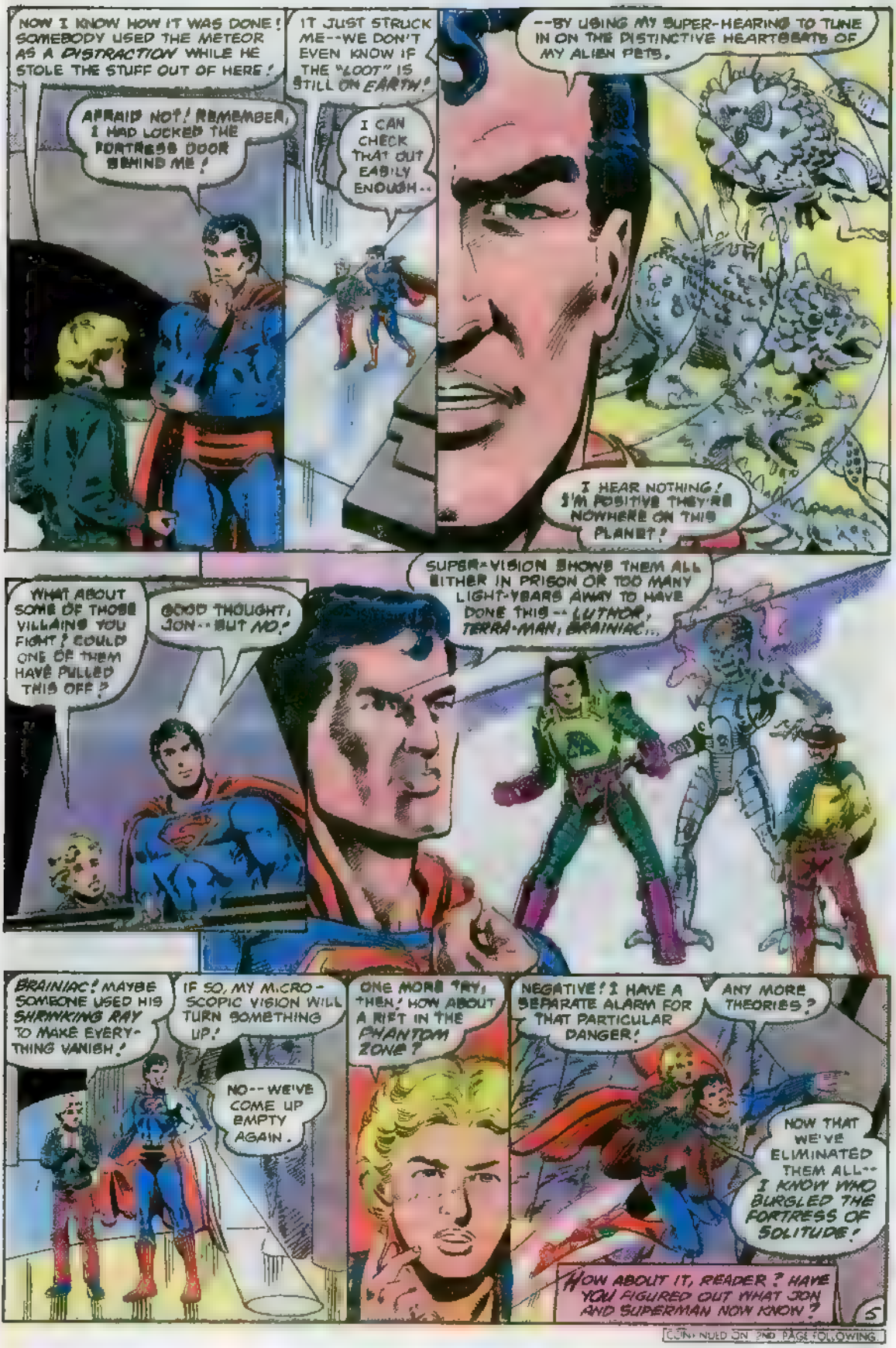
T.M., I have solved the problem of holes in socks. I simply wash one of each pair in a different load of laundry. I add lots of bleach to everything and never sort the colors. The result is that we have the most stunning array of non-matching socks around. Bob throws them away long before they ever get worn out! So, look up in the sky (and you'll probably see some brilliantly-hued socks in orbit) and we'll see you next issue!—Laurie Rozakis for Bob Rozakis.


SUPERMAN
DARN! STILL CAN'T GET THIS WORKING RIGHT!
...AND JON WAS SO THRILLED WITH HIS BIRTHDAY GIFT OF A HOME COMPUTER, SUPERMAN!
NOW IF HE'D ONLY BE PATIENT ENOUGH TO LEARN HOW TO USE IT! CHUCKLE!
...ERROR PROGRAM WILL NOT RUN ...ERROR
SON, HOW ABOUT A LITTLE PROGRAMMING HELP FROM A CERTAIN BOYHOOD FRIEND OF YOUR FATHER'S?
NO, THANKS, DAD--I'D RATHER LEARN TO WORK THIS ON MY OWN!
GOOD THINKING, JON!
SUPERMAN!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JON! I CAME BY TO ASK IF YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN TAKING A TOUR OF MY FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE!
INTERESTED?! JUST LET ME GET MY JACKET... MY GLOVES!
MY CAPE WILL KEEP YOU WARM ENOUGH, JON!
WHILE I DO OKAY WITH MY OTHER SUBJECTS, I JUST CAN'T GET THE [illegible] COMPUTERS!

WELL, HERE'S A TIP, JON-- LEARN TO THINK LIKE A COMPUTER DOES!
THE "KEY" TO EVERY PROBLEM IS LOGIC! A STRAIGHTFORWARD, METHODICAL APPROACH IS ALWAYS THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION, NO MATTER--
--NOW BAFFLING A RIDDLE YOU'RE FACED WITH! HUH- ?!
AN HOUR AGO, THIS ARCTIC RETREAT HOUSED THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF WEAPONS, EXTRATERRESTRIAL ANIMALS, AND SUPERMAN-SOUVENIRS ON EARTH!
COLORIST: GENE D'ANGELO
EDITOR: JULIUS SCHWARTZ
WRITER: MARK WAID
PENCILLER: RICK HOBERG
INKER: STEVE MITCHELL
LETTERER: MILT SNAPINN
NOW, IT IS A BARREN CHAMBER OF ROCK AND ICE, HOUSING NOTHING BUT AN EMPTY, EERIE SILENCE!
READER, MATCH WITS WITH SUPERMAN AND HIS YOUNG FRIEND JON ROSS AND SEE IF YOU CAN SOLVE ...
"The PUZZLE of the PURLOINED FORTRESS!"
2


--ARSENAL--
THE ZOO--
--COMMUNICATIONS ROOM--
--THE ARCHIVES--
--LAB--
--TROPHIES--
--THEY'RE ALL GONE!
GONE--WHERE?
NOT ONLY WHERE, BUT HOW?
THE FORTRESS HAS--OR HAD--THE MOST SOPHISTICATED ALARM SYSTEM IN THE GALAXY!
BRRR! WHOEVER DID IT STOLE THE HEATER, TOO!
SORRY, JON! LET ME WARM UP THE AIR WITH MY HEAT VISION--
--AND THANK YOU FOR THE CLUE YOU JUST GAVE ME! MY GUESS IS I COULD TELL JON WHO PULLED THIS CAPER RIGHT NOW--
--BUT SINCE I KNOW WE'RE IN NO DANGER, THIS WILL BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO DRIVE HOME A LESSON IN DEDUCTIVE REASONING!

WELL, JON--ANY IDEAS HOW TO SOLVE THIS MYSTERY?
THIS MAY SOUND KINDA SILLY, BUT WHENEVER I CAN'T FIND SOMETHING, DAD ALWAYS ASKS "WHEN DID YOU SEE IT LAST?"
"FAIR ENOUGH! LAST TIME I WAS HERE, AS YOUR DAD I WAS PLAYING CHESS WITH THE SUPER-COMPUTER, WHEN..."
BEEP BEEP BEEP
THE EMERGENCY ALARM--THIS GAME WILL HAVE TO WAIT!
THERE'S THE ALARM-RINGER--A METEOR PLUMMETING THROUGH THE AURORA BOREALIS AND HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE FORTRESS!
NORMALLY THE FORTRESS' DEFENSES WOULD REPEL ANY METEOR, BUT THIS ROCK'S TRIP THROUGH THE "NORTHERN LIGHTS"...
--MAY HAVE GONE MORE THAN GIVE IT A SUPER-MAGNETIC CHARGE! NO APPARENT POTENTIAL DANGER HERE, THOUGH!
SO IT'S BACK INTO DEEP SPACE FOR THIS HUNK OF IRON--AND OVER TO PETE ROSS' PLACE FOR THIS MAN OF STEEL!
4


NOW I KNOW HOW IT WAS DONE! SOMEBODY USED THE METEOR AS A DISTRACTION WHILE HE STOLE THE STUFF OUT OF HERE!
AFRAID NOT! REMEMBER, I HAD LOCKED THE FORTRESS DOOR BEHIND ME!
IT JUST STRUCK ME--WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF THE "LOOT" IS STILL ON EARTH!
I CAN CHECK THAT OUT EASILY ENOUGH--
--BY USING MY SUPER-HEARING TO TUNE IN ON THE DISTINCTIVE HEARTBEATS OF MY ALIEN PETS.
I HEAR NOTHING! I'M POSITIVE THEY'RE NOWHERE ON THIS PLANET!
WHAT ABOUT SOME OF THOSE VILLAINS YOU FIGHT? COULD ONE OF THEM HAVE PULLED THIS OFF?
GOOD THOUGHT, JON--BUT NO!
SUPER-VISION SHOWS THEM ALL EITHER IN PRISON OR TOO MANY LIGHT-YEARS AWAY TO HAVE DONE THIS -- LUTHOR, TERRA-MAN, BRAINIAC...
BRAINIAC! MAYBE SOMEONE USED HIS SHRINKING RAY TO MAKE EVERYTHING VANISH!
IF SO, MY MICROSCOPIC VISION WILL TURN SOMETHING UP!
NO--WE'VE COME UP EMPTY AGAIN.
ONE MORE TRY, THEN! HOW ABOUT A RIFT IN THE PHANTOM ZONE?
NEGATIVE! I HAVE A SEPARATE ALARM FOR THAT PARTICULAR DANGER!
ANY MORE THEORIES?
NOW THAT WE'VE ELIMINATED THEM ALL--I KNOW WHO BURGLED THE FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE!
HOW ABOUT IT, READER? HAVE YOU FIGURED OUT WHAT JON AND SUPERMAN NOW KNOW?
5
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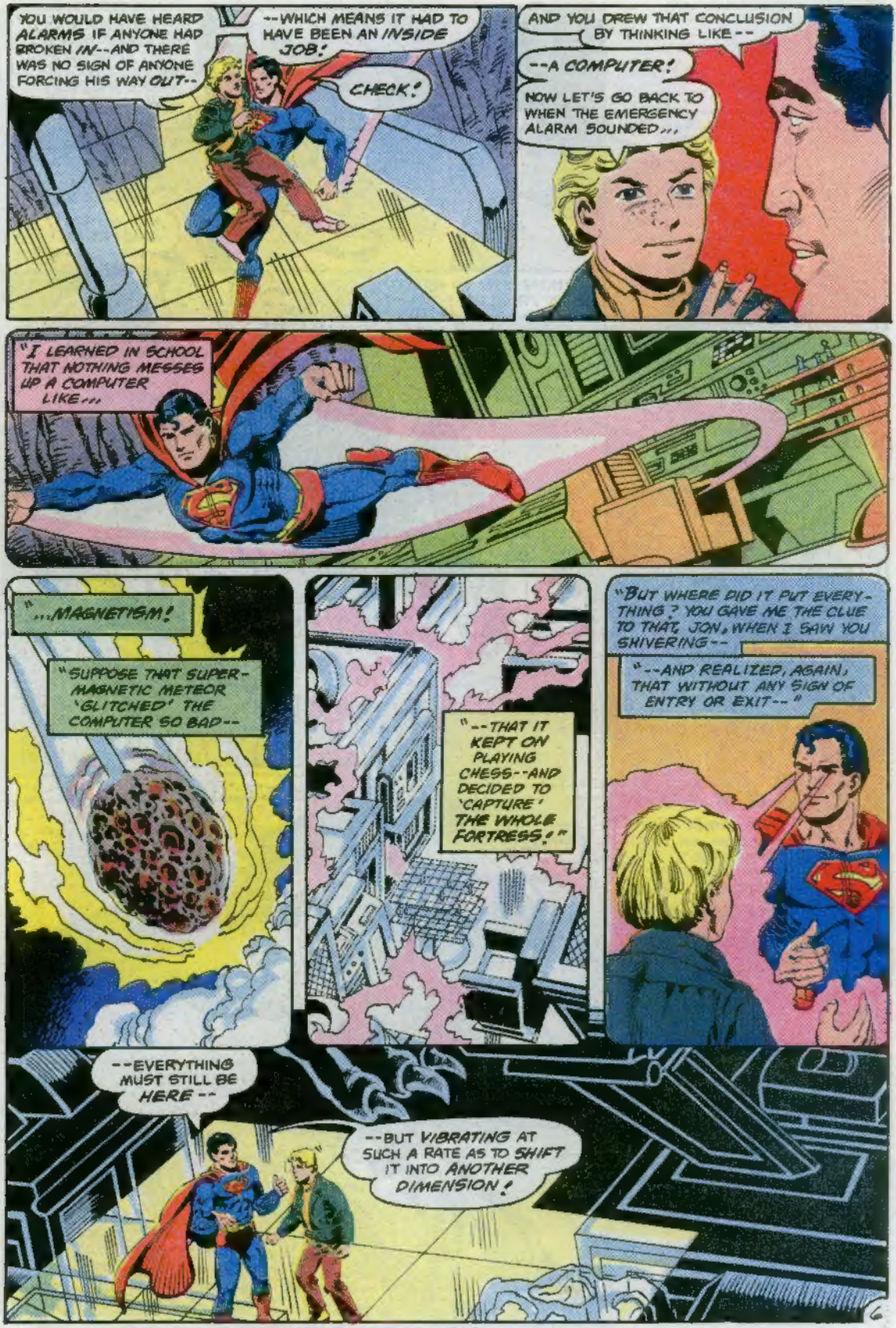
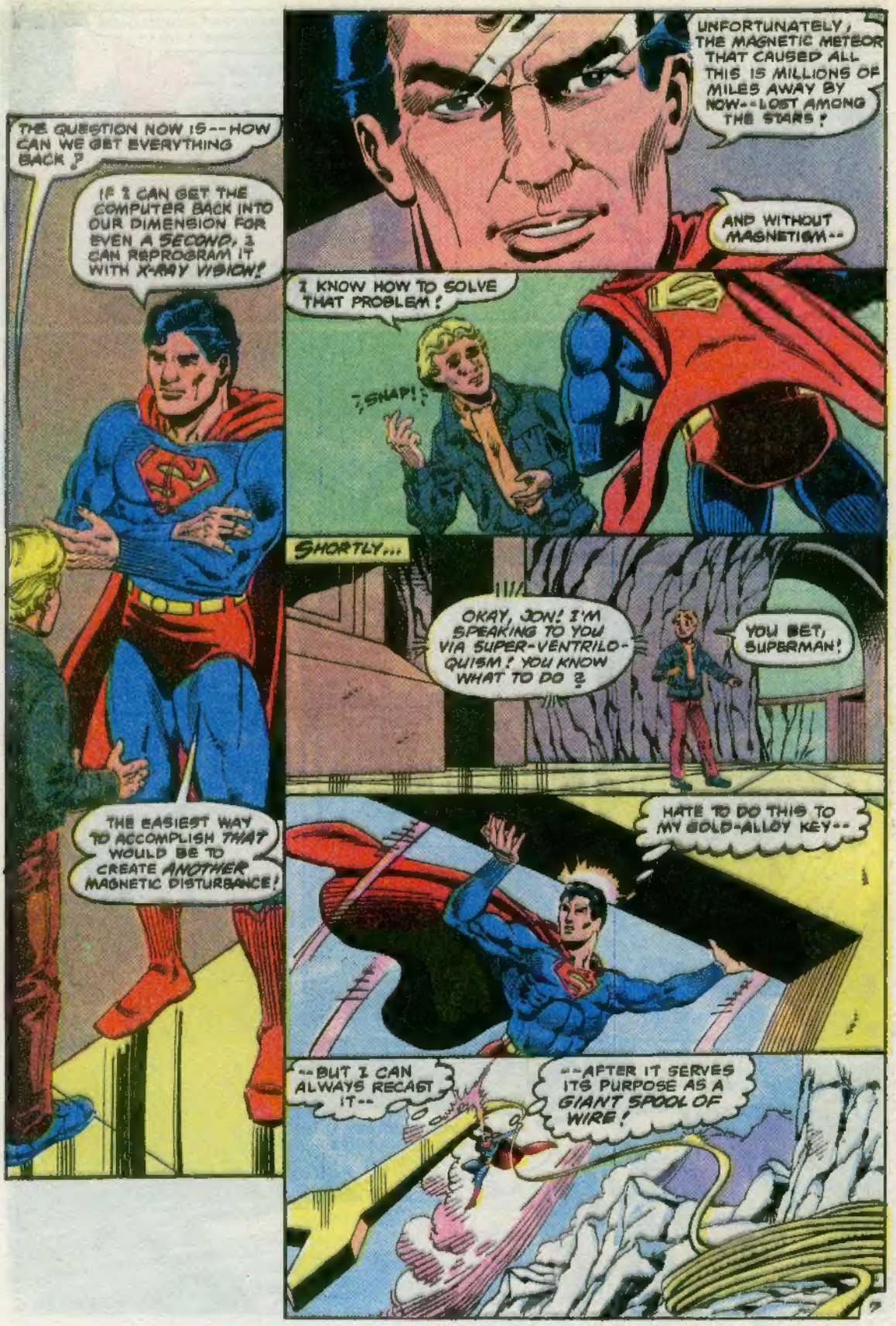
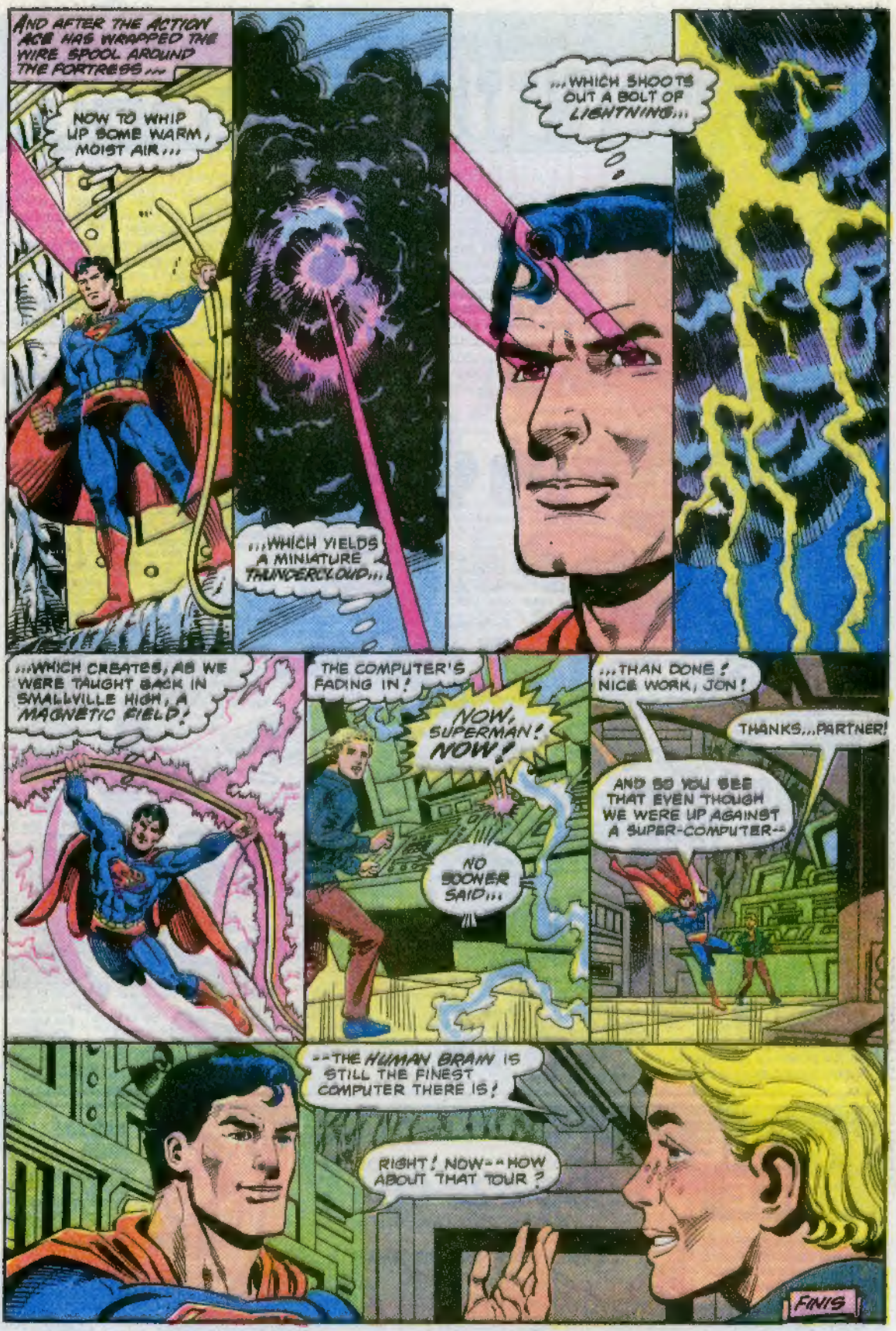

YOU WOULD HAVE HEARD ALARMS IF ANYONE HAD BROKEN IN--AND THERE WAS NO SIGN OF ANYONE FORCING HIS WAY OUT--
--WHICH MEANS IT HAD TO HAVE BEEN AN INSIDE JOB!
CHECK!
AND YOU DREW THAT CONCLUSION BY THINKING LIKE--
--A COMPUTER!
NOW LET'S GO BACK TO WHEN THE EMERGENCY ALARM SOUNDED...
"I LEARNED IN SCHOOL THAT NOTHING MESSES UP A COMPUTER LIKE...
"...MAGNETISM!
"SUPPOSE THAT SUPER-MAGNETIC METEOR 'GLITCHED' THE COMPUTER SO BAD--
"--THAT IT KEPT ON PLAYING CHESS--AND DECIDED TO 'CAPTURE' THE WHOLE FORTRESS!"
"BUT WHERE DID IT PUT EVERYTHING? YOU GAVE ME THE CLUE TO THAT, JON, WHEN I SAW YOU SHIVERING--
"--AND REALIZED, AGAIN, THAT WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF ENTRY OR EXIT--"
--EVERYTHING MUST STILL BE HERE--
--BUT VIBRATING AT SUCH A RATE AS TO SHIFT IT INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION!


UNFORTUNATELY, THE MAGNETIC METEOR THAT CAUSED ALL THIS IS MILLIONS OF MILES AWAY BY NOW--LOST AMONG THE STARS!
AND WITHOUT MAGNETISM--
I KNOW HOW TO SOLVE THAT PROBLEM!
;SNAP!;
SHORTLY...
OKAY, JON! I'M SPEAKING TO YOU VIA SUPER-VENTRILO-QUISM! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?
YOU BET, SUPERMAN!
HATE TO DO THIS TO MY GOLD-ALLOY KEY--
--BUT I CAN ALWAYS RECAST IT--
--AFTER IT SERVES ITS PURPOSE AS A GIANT SPOOL OF WIRE!
THE QUESTION NOW IS--HOW CAN WE GET EVERYTHING BACK?
IF I CAN GET THE COMPUTER BACK INTO OUR DIMENSION FOR EVEN A SECOND, I CAN REPROGRAM IT WITH X-RAY VISION!
THE EASIEST WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THAT WOULD BE TO CREATE ANOTHER MAGNETIC DISTURBANCE!


AND AFTER THE ACTION ACE HAS WRAPPED THE WIRE SPOOL AROUND THE FORTRESS...
NOW TO WHIP UP SOME WARM, MOIST AIR...
...WHICH YIELDS A MINIATURE THUNDERCLOUD...
...WHICH SHOOTS OUT A BOLT OF LIGHTNING...
...WHICH CREATES, AS WE WERE TAUGHT BACK IN SMALLVILLE HIGH, A MAGNETIC FIELD!
THE COMPUTER'S FADING IN!
NOW, SUPERMAN! NOW!
NO SOONER SAID...
...THAN DONE! NICE WORK, JON!
THANKS...PARTNER!
AND SO YOU SEE THAT EVEN THOUGH WE WERE UP AGAINST A SUPER-COMPUTER--
--THE HUMAN BRAIN IS STILL THE FINEST COMPUTER THERE IS!
RIGHT! NOW--HOW ABOUT THAT TOUR?
FINIS

MEANWHILE...

All I wanted to do that night was go to sleep.

I am an early-morning riser, as longtime readers of this column know. When I'm on the road at comic conventions, I generally stay up late, but I still get up early. So I usually am very tired. The San Diego show, being the longest (and three time zones away), also leaves me the weariest. Well, 1983 was no different and all I really wanted was to get some sleep.

It was pushing 2 am when I walked into the lobby of the Executive Hotel. As I started towards the elevator I was charged at by a thundering herd of maddened animals. Actually, it was a couple of my writers—good-natured folks like Mark Evanier, Len Wein, and Marv Wolfman. They certainly seemed excited by something. Well, as Mark explained, they came up with an idea for a new series and had waited in the hope of telling me about it and soliciting my approval.

I, however, could think only of that nice large bed a few floors up.

That, alas, was not to be. The thundering herd jumped onto the elevator with me and took me up ... but past my floor. We went straight to the roof and Mark explained that it was there they had the brainstorm. I stiffled a yawn and said, "OK, give me the 30 second version."

Mark, Len, and Marv began explaining it to me all at once. I held up a hand. "One of you. Mark." Taking the cue, Mark launched into his explanation about a series which would be designed for one writer to top the next over 12 issues. They had already come up with a title, THE DC CHALLENGE (Hmm, nice sound to that), and decided it was the biggest thing to happen since Krypton blew up.

They kept on and on about how wonderful and original the concept was and how it'd never been done before! I kept thinking back to the bed now just a few floors below me.

"Sure. We'll do it. But to keep things straight, I'll edit it. Now I'm going to sleep." And so I went, leaving behind the sounds of whooping and hollering. I discovered later that they had decided to throw me off the roof if I had said no. Lucky for me I'm a pushover.

As I fell asleep, convinced they would forget about it in the morning, the series started to take shape. They put 12 pencillers' names in a hat along with 11 writers' names. Then, pairs were pulled out to establish the order. Mark knew he had something going when his was the first name out of the hat. Before the security guard chased them off the roof, all 12 teams were lined up (with all 11 writers convinced they could plot the finale together).

Before the convention ended, Mark had typed up a quick plot and got everyone to approve it. I got to see it last—or almost last. Still, it was an interesting story involving Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, the Riddler, Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, and Adam Strange.

Time went on and within two months, we worked out all the technical details for the series and work began in earnest that fall. The first issue was penciled, dialogued, and lettered before the end of the year. Shortly after the new year began, Len picked up the gauntlet and started the second issue. By then, however, I knew this wasn't going to come out quickly. The series uses so many of our top talents that it has to be fit in between their regular assignments.

I also knew that this was going to be harder work than a regular comic because it entails a lot of coordination. I asked newly hired Bob Greenberger to work with me as assistant zoo keeper. Together, we got the first several issues moving along. Alas, just as I didn't have time to edit the series by myself, it was painfully obvious I couldn't ink it all either, as originally planned.

Eventually, other people who immediately said yes that warm summer evening or the following few days were unable to do their chapter when the time came. We made as few changes as possible and the final tally pretty much resembles the original list. Everyone's enthusiasm started running high on the project as we neared having enough issues completed to put it on the schedule. We even put together an early sneak preview for the third DC SAMPLER last fall.

A few snags cropped up, the sort of everyday problems that slow up the best-planned projects. Finally, I knew I couldn't give the project my best attention and turned it entirely over to Bob, who took up the task with his usual burst of boyish enthusiasm.

And so we're ready at last. Around mid-August, comic specialty shops will be treated to the first phase of the DC CHALLENGE in our special deluxe format.

The rules were really very simple. Writer A begins the story and the sub-plots, leaving Writer B with at least one cliffhanger. Writer B must get out of the cliffhangers, advance the story and set up cliffhangers for Writer C. Part of the catch is that writers cannot use the characters they are associated with, so Mike Barr, for example, couldn't use the Outsiders. Also, no new subplot could be added without a previous one being resolved. Titles were left along with the cliffhangers and clues. Each writer has picked up the CHALLENGE with a great deal of enthusiasm only to call back a few days later wondering why they ever said yes in the first place.

I've seen the first half so far and it looks like a great deal of fun. So much so that I was determined to be a part of this and have agreed to ink one chapter.

For the record-keepers out there, here is the line-up:

1. Mark Evanier, Gene Colan & Bob Smith
2. Len Wein, Chuck Patton & Mike DeCarlo
3. Doug Moench, Carmine Infantino & Bob Smith
4. Paul Levitz, Gil Kane & Klaus Janson
5. Mike W. Barr, Dave Gibbons & Mark Farmer
6. Elliott S! Maggin, Dan Jurgens & Larry Mahlstedt
7. Paul Kupperberg, Joe Staton & Steve Mitchell
8. Gerry Conway, Rick Hoberg & Dick Giordano
9. Roy Thomas, Don Heck & Karl Kesel
10. Dan Mishkin, Curt Swan & Terry Austin
11. Marv Wolfman, Keith Giffen & Romeo Tanghal
12. Everyone, George Pérez & Terry Austin

Looks like a lot of fun, doesn't it? Why don't you try the first issue and see if you can solve it before we do. One hint: we're all making it up as we go along, so nothing may be as it seems!

Thank you and good afternoon.

Dick

☐ **Tales of the Legion 328:** The Legion of Super-Villains makes Orando disappear!

☐ **Action Comics 572:** Three complete, all-out action super-tales!

☐ **Detective Comics 535:** Mirror Master and Captain Boomerang divide Gotham for themselves!

☐ **World's Finest 320:** Can Batman cure Superman of the dreams that plague him?

☐ **All-Star Squadron 50:** Harbinger arrives in 1942, spelling doom and change!

☐ **V™ 9:** A wrap-up issue as the action shifts to New York and the fighting intensifies!

☐ **Star Trek® Annual 1:** Captain Kirk's first mission aboard the U.S.S. *Enterprise*—revealed at last!

☐ **Nathaniel Dusk II 1:** Summer, 1934, and Dusk finds himself the object of a murderer!

☐ **Legion of Super-Heroes Annual 1:** Is a serial murderer loose in the 30th century? A murder mystery!